

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8108

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0929

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS AF/S

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, BC, US

SUBJECT: BIO DATA ON LADY RUTH KHAMA

REF: BOLEN-PERRY TELCON

1. LADY RUTH KHAMA WAS BORN IN 1924 IN ELTHAM, LONDON, ENGLAND. RUTH WILLIAMS SERVED IN THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY AIR FORCE AND, AT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE IN SEPTEMBER, 1948, WAS EMPLOYED AS A CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY AT LLOYD'S.

2. THE MARRIAGE AROUSED CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM AMONG THE BAMANGWATO WHO CONDEMNED IT AT A TRIBAL MEETING IN 1948. IN 1949, THE TRIBE REVERSED ITSELF, DECLARING IN FAVOR OF THE MARRIAGE. HOWEVER, A JUDICIAL INQUIRY THAT YEAR ADVISED AGAINST RECOGNITION OF SERETSE KHAMA AS CHIEF AND URGED THAT HE BE EXILED FROM BECHUANALAND. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH KHAMA IN LONDON IN 1950, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO WITHHOLD RECOGNITION OF HIM AND ORDERED THAT HE NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO PROTECTORATE WITHOUT DISSION. HE WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN IN 1956 ONLY AFTER HE HAD RENOUNCED HIS CLAIM TO THE CHIEFTANCY OF THE BAMANGWATO.

3. WE JUDGE LADY KHAMA TO BE INFLUENTIAL WITH THE PRESIDENT, EVEN ON POLICY MATTERS. IN ADDITION, SHE IS QUITE PROTECTIVE OF HIS HEALTH WHICH HAS NOT BEEN GOOD IN RECENT YEARS. SHE ACCOMPANIED HIM TO LONDON IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR WHERE HE WNT FOR AN EXTENDED MEDICAL CHECK-UP.

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4. LADY KHAMA REGULARLY TRAVELS WITH THE PRESIDENT ON STATE

AND OTHER VISITS. SHE ACCOMPANIED HIM TO COPENHAGEN IN 1970 AND ON A SIX-DAY STATE VISIT TO TANZANIA IN SEPTEMBER 1973. SHE ALSO ATTENDED THE MAY 1973 OAU MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT AND TRAVELLED TO THE MAY 1975 COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN KINGSTON AND SUBSEQUENT STATE VISITS TO BARBADOS AND GUYANA. IN APRIL 1976, SHE ACCOMPANIED PRESIDENT KHAMA ON THE STATE VISIT TO INDIA.

5. LADY KHAMA IS AN OUTSPOKEN PROPONENT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN A MALE DOMINATED SOCIETY. DURING A SPEECH IN 1976 SHE SAID, "IT'S QUITE REMARKABLE THAT SOME WHO SHOUT THE LOUDEST ABOUT EQUALITY AMONG ALL MEN, MEAN JUST THAT. THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF SEEING THAT WOMENFOLD WILL ENJOY THE SAME FREEDOMS." PRESIDENT KHAM, PERHAPS AT HER URGIN, OFTEN SOUNDS A SIMILAR THEME. BOTSWANA NOW HAS A WOMAN CABINET MINISTER AND ANOTHER FEMALE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

6. LADY KHAMA HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXTREMELY ACTIVE IN SOCIAL WORK AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS. IN 1964, SHE RAISED MONEY FOR A COMMUNITY CENTER IN SEROWE, THE KHAMA'S HOME VILLAGE. SHE IS PRESIDENT OF THE BOTSWANA COUNCIL OF WOMEN AND BOTSWANA RED CROSS AND HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN THE GIRL GUIDES.

7. THE KHAMAS HAVE FOUR CHILDREN. JACQUELINE, BORN IN 1950, MARRIED A DUTCH CITIZEN, JOHAN TER HAAR, IN DECEMBER 1972. THEY HAVE A SMALL SON, LADY KHAMA'S ONLY GRANDCHILD. IAN KHAMA WAS BORN IN 1953 AND THE TWIN SONS, TSHEKEDI AND ANTHONY, IN 1958. IAN KHAMA, A CAPTAIN AND THE TRAINING INSTRUCTOR FOR THE POLICY MOBILE UNIT, IS AGRADUATE OF SANDHURST. HE WILL PROBABLY ACCOMPANY THE PRESIDENT TO THE U.S. BIO-DATA ON HIM CAN BE FOUND IN GABORONE 417, 610 AND 665.

8. LADY KHAMA HAS A SISTER, A MRS. SANDERSON, WHO LIVES IN ZAMBIA AND WHO VISITS FREQUENTLY IN GABORONE. LADY KHAMA'S AUNT, A MISS GODDE, LIVES WITH THE FAIMLY IN STATE HOUSE.

9. GOOD PHOTOS OF FAMILY BEING POUCHED. AF/S.
BOLEN

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